



STATE SENATOR  
**BRUCE PATTERSON**  
IN THE LOOP ★

Serving the 7th District | P.O. Box 30036 | Lansing, MI 48909  
PHONE: (517) 373-7350 | TOLL FREE: 1-866-262-7307 | FAX: (517) 373-9228  
WEB: [www.senate.michigan.gov/patterson](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/patterson) | E-MAIL: [senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov)

**03/27/06**

→ *PLEASE FORWARD THIS TO A FRIEND!*

**Medicare Matters! -- in Plymouth**

Do you have lingering questions on the new Medicare prescription drug benefit? You are not alone.

New coverage begins in May. To learn about the new coverage and how you can reduce the costs of your medicines, come to Plymouth Township's Friendship Station, on Friday, April 7, from 10 am to 2 pm.

Sen. Patterson is sponsoring this comprehensive, community-based education program to help people with Medicare, and their families, understand the new coverage, assess their personal situation, understand their choices, compare plan options, then make the enrollment decision that is right for their health and financial situation.

The Friendship Station is at 42375 Schoolcraft, at Bradner, in Plymouth Township. The phone number there is (734) 354-3203.

You should bring *documentation*:

For the Low-Income Subsidy, these documents can show that you qualify for this benefit:

- bank or credit union statements with current balances
- investment statements and stock certificates
- tax returns
- life insurance policies & related statements
- payroll stubs.

To enroll in a prescription drug insurance plan, please bring:

- a list of current prescriptions, including dosage strengths and instructions
- your Medicare card
- your list of preferred pharmacies
- any correspondence received from former employers, government agencies, or a Medigap insurance provider, about the new Medicare drug benefit ('Part D').

For more information, call Sue Trussell (734) 783-1642.

### **'March is Reading Month'**

Sen. Patterson visited Allen Elementary School, Plymouth, on Friday, March 24. He read to three 4<sup>th</sup> Grade classes, and donated Anne Margaret Lewis' *Lighthouse Fireflies* to the school library. Afterwards, the students performed a musical review of Michigan's history, set to the tune of Abba's "Dancing Queen." He urges all parents, "Read to your kids; this gift will open the world to them, stimulate their creativity, and enhance their futures."



Sen. Patterson enjoyed the student performance at Allen Elementary School, in Plymouth, 3/24. The students had performed it the night before at their school play. Sen. Patterson loved the song and the enthusiasm of the students. He was impressed that the song was entertaining while being educational.

### **Plymouth Choir to perform in Capitol**

The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade choir from Our Lady of Good Counsel School, in Plymouth, will perform in the State Capitol Rotunda on Wednesday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, at noon. Some 40 students will be involved. Sen. Patterson looks forward to greeting them that day.

### **Pier safety measures approved**

Legislation that toughens penalties for stealing life-saving devices from piers and beaches won approval recently in the Michigan Senate and now goes to the House.

The legislation would make it a misdemeanor for anyone to tamper with or steal a marine-safety device maintained by the state or a local government. If a person dies or becomes permanently disabled because the device was unavailable or unusable, the offender can be found guilty of a felony.

Other resolutions urge the Department of Natural Resources to increase public awareness and notification of rip currents in the Great Lakes and call on the Michigan Department of Education to teach pupils about the dangers of rip currents and learn basic pier safety.

### **Senate Committee approves Renewable Energy bill package**

Seven bills to advance the production, use, and availability of renewable fuels were sent to the Senate floor by the Technology and Energy Committee, chaired by Sen. Patterson, last Wednesday. SBs 1074-1079, and SB 1109 may still be refined through further discussion, and further amendments are planned, to coordinate with other legislation. Ethanol and bio-diesel are produced from corn and soy, to blend with gasoline or diesel fuel. Detroit car manufacturers advertised this during the recent Superbowl; but drivers have to be able to find such fuels readily when traveling. The bills should foster this development, and assist in boosting vehicle production, and job creation.

### **Senate votes to save state parks**

Bills designed to protect Michigan's state parks were unanimously approved by the Senate. Senate Bill 971 would prevent the Department of Natural Resources from selling a state park or any specially designated natural or wilderness area - making it a special act requiring approval from the Legislature. At present, there is no provision in state law requiring legislative review of a proposal to sell a state park or a natural or wilderness area.

The bills also require the State Park Advisory Committee to study any DNR proposal to sell a state park. The DNR would also be required to hold a public hearing in the vicinity of the park prior to proposing a sale. SB 972 would prevent the DNR from designating state park land as "surplus land" without specific legislative approval. Under current Michigan law the DNR is allowed to declare any land it owns as "surplus" land and put it up for sale. SBs 971 and 972 now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

### **Protesting at funerals would require a permit**

A bill has been introduced that would require protestors to apply for a permit if they want to protest outside a funeral home, cemetery or other location where a funeral or memorial service is taking place. The bill would require protestors to apply for and be issued a permit from the local unit of government. (A permit would not have to be issued if the service is held on private land; one *may* be issued if the service is on public property.) Additionally, the local government may charge a fee for the application and issuance of a permit.

### **Concerns raised over Treasury's role in the state's tobacco settlement**

After hearing testimony from the deputy state treasurer, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jobs Oversight Committee expressed concern over the Department of Treasury's role in the state tobacco settlement.

The Securities and Exchange Commission recently ordered Bear Stearns to pay \$250 million in penalties for late trading and market violations. Although the Department of Treasury knew about the SEC's investigation, it failed to notify the Michigan Tobacco Settlement Finance Authority of the investigation. Bear Stearns is the senior underwriter for the tobacco authority, which will provide \$400 million through the sale of bonds for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jobs Fund.

The committee pointed out that since Michigan's tobacco bond sale is the largest of its kind in the nation and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jobs Fund has some political overtones, the state should be particularly circumspect throughout the process, and Treasury needs to be forthright in dealing with the committee.

### **House committee approves Senate's SAVE the Children**

The Michigan House Committee on Education on March 15 unanimously approved a landmark legislative package to help prevent early learning failure and give students the skills they need to succeed both in school and in life. The legislation will ensure students master basic skills to be successful in the classroom; encourage alliances between home, parents and school; and provide valuable training for teachers to implement prevention and intervention programs. Senate Bills 328-330 now move to the full House for consideration.

### **April 15 is just around the corner --**

If you are in need of tax forms, you can get them from the Michigan Department of Treasury: <http://michigan.gov/treasury/> Look in the lower left of the screen. You can print them from there.

A Taxpayer's Guide is found on Sen. Patterson's webpage, to download or print:

<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/patterson/publications/index.htm> .

Remember the *Time Change* Sunday, April 2: Spring forward one hour.

### **Comcast Newsmakers: Patterson interviewed on Long-Range Energy**

Sen. Patterson's interview will be shown on CNN Headline News soon in Wayne County. The Southfield Comcast production team will broadcast it throughout the Southeast Michigan region in the week of April 24 - 28. (Times to be announced.)

*In the* meantime, go to Sen. Patterson's webpage, < [www.senate.michigan.gov/patterson](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/patterson) >, scroll to the lower right corner, and find the video link there on-line. It runs five minutes.

### **Office Hours schedule for March – early April, 2006**

On Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, Sue Trussell, Sen. Patterson's District Representative, will hold office hours from 11:00am to 1:00pm at the Flat Rock City Library, 25200 Gibraltar Road, Flat Rock, 48134 (734) 782-2430. (This includes Rockwood constituents.)

In April, Office Hours will change to Mondays, usually from 11 am to 1 pm.

April 3<sup>rd</sup> - Brownstown Community Center, 21311 Telegraph Road

April 10<sup>th</sup> - Northville Public Library (This includes Northville Twp constituents.)

With special hours: 12 – 2pm.

### **Contact Information**

Thank you for your interest in our current state issues. If you would like to receive future updates via e-mail, please contact my office at < [senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov) >.

You can also visit me in my Lansing office at 505 Farnum Building, just across S. Capitol Avenue from the state Capitol; or you can send me mail at P. O. Box 30036, Lansing, MI 48909. Telephone (517) 373-7350 or (866) 262-7307; fax (517) 373-9228. I want to hear from you.

See the *Legislative Questionnaire* on the Website, too! Your responses are welcomed!